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WPCOG - Newsletter

May 2020

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New Rules for Electronic Meetings

The General Assembly has enacted modifications to the laws governing meetings of public bodies, and voting and quorum rules for city and county governing boards. The new law modifies those rules and provides specific guidance regarding remote meetings, including quorum, notice, voting, public comment, and public hearings. These provisions are in Section 4.31 of the Act, (starting on page 61 in the PDF linked above). The new provisions for remote public meetings became effective on May 4, 2020, and only apply when there is a declaration of a state of emergency by the Governor or General Assembly under GS 166A-90.20. They aren't triggered by city or county emergency declarations.



Transportation

New Priority Needs List Submitted to NCDOT

NCDOT follows a data-driven process for ranking major transportation projects and deciding which projects end up funded. The Greater Hickory MPO submits project needs for scoring to the Strategic Prioritization Office of Transportation (SPOT). The result of that scoring process serves to develop the ten-year budget of programmed projects in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Last round, thirty-two highway and two bicycle-pedestrian projects were submitted to SPOT, out of which six highway projects and one bicycle-pedestrian project ended up committed for funding.

This latest round, a total of forty-six transportation projects will be submitted to SPOT. These include five projects in Alexander County, twelve in Burke County, twelve in Caldwell County, fifteen in Catawba County, and two in multiple counties. The identified needs include thirty-eight highway projects, two aviation projects, five bicycle-pedestrian projects, and one rail project. Of the thirty-eight highway needs submitted, there are eight widening projects, five access-management or median projects, five intersections, two interchanges, two new alignment, one signal system, and fifteen modernizations or roadway upgrades. Of the five bicycle-pedestrian needs submitted, there are two new sidewalks, two new multi-use paths, and one corridor of enhanced crossings. To see the full list of new project needs submitted for scoring, visit the [WPCOG/GHMPO Prioritization web page](#).

Article by Brian Horton

Workforce Development Board

NC Unemployment Insurance Data Analysis

NC LEAD has created this visual of how COVID-19 unemployment is impacting NC, and all of its 100 counties.

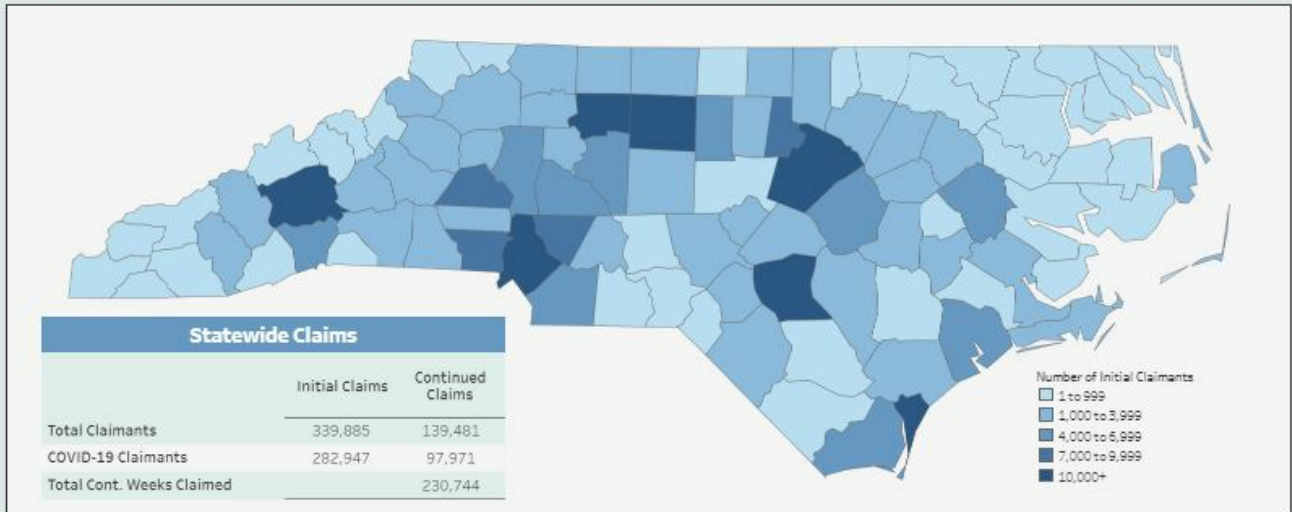
The NC Commerce Labor & Economic Analysis Division (LEAD) collects data, conducts research and analysis and publishes reports about the state's economy and labor market. Information and data produced by LEAD help stakeholders make more informed decisions on business recruitment, education and workforce policies and career development, as well as gain a more extensive view of North Carolina's economy.

<https://bi.nc.gov/t/COM-LEAD/views/RegionalUIDashboard/RegionalUIDashboard?:isGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y&embed=y>

North Carolina Unemployment Insurance Claims

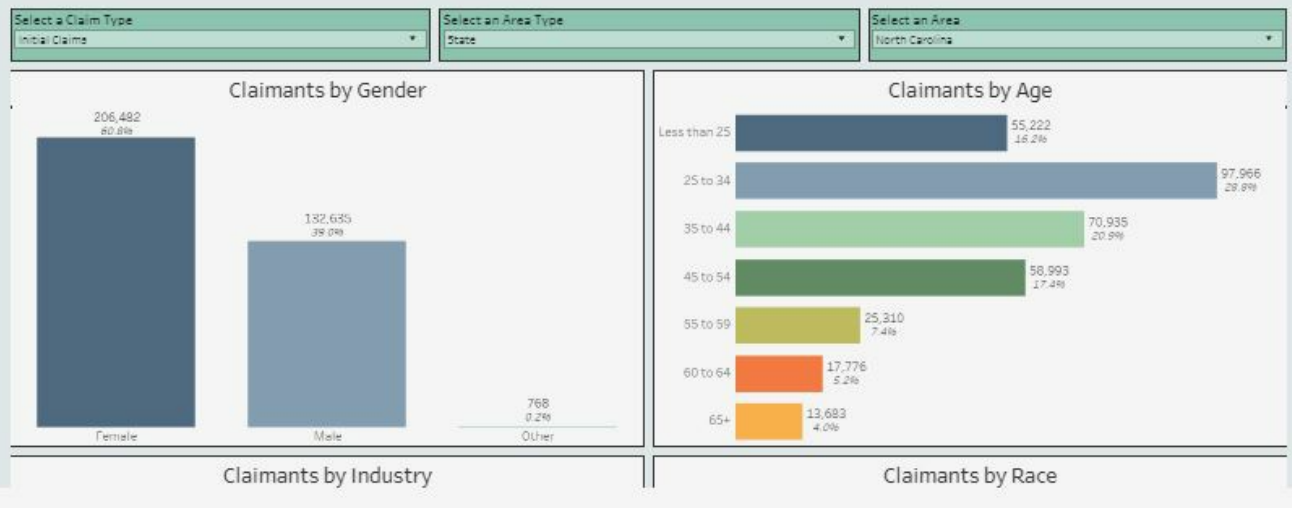
< Dashboard Data Table Notes >

Claims Filed from March 1 to March 31, 2020



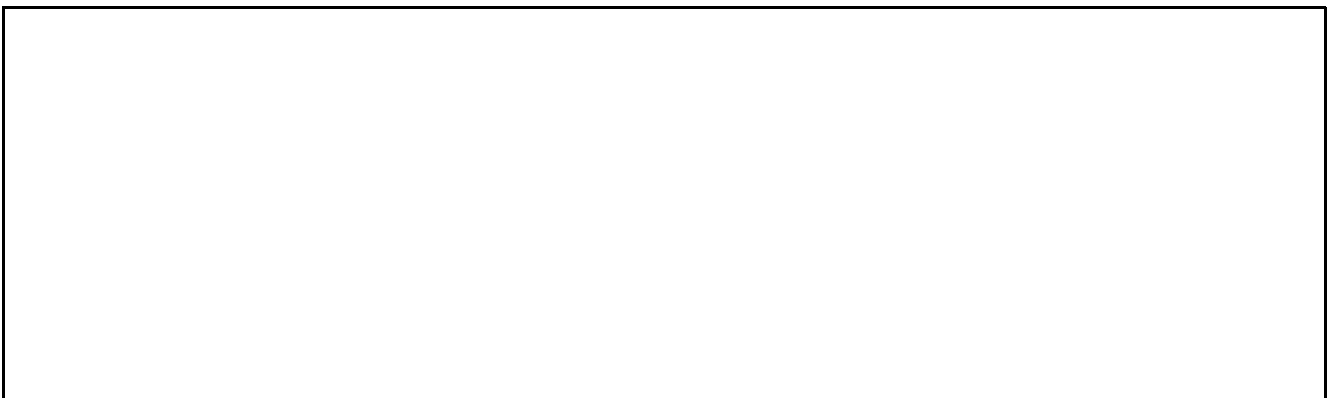
March 2020 UI Claimant Information

(Percentages of total claimants in *italics*)



Article by Wendy Johnson

Area Agency on Aging Older Americans Month - Make Your Mark



Make Your

MARK!

OLDER
AMERICANS
MONTH



#OAM2020



Each year, the Administration on Community Living (ACL) distinguishes a theme that is used to empower, encourage, and engage older adults. This year's Older Americans Month (OAM) theme, Make Your Mark, highlights older adults' unique and lasting contributions to their communities-everything from sharing a story with grandchildren to leaving a legacy of community action. In the spirit of this theme, here are a few ways to make your mark this May and all year long

Volunteer your time. Local schools, shelters, food kitchens, and hospitals always need support. Help a neighbor by prepping a meal, picking up groceries, or giving them a ride. Or, take time to pass on your knowledge. Why not tutor a student who could use extra help in math, music, or science?

Share your story. There are so many ways to do this, from showing your grandkids around your old neighborhood to writing a book. Take a class and learn how to express yourself with the arts! Or, assemble a photo album of important moments in your life.

Get involved in your neighborhood. Join a homeowner or resident association, organize a block party, or sign up for a book club or other social group. Have a green thumb? Small projects like planting flowers in your yard or cleaning up the community park have a big impact.

During these uncertain times, let's not forget that older adults make their mark every day as volunteers, employees, employers, parents, grandparents, mentors, advocates and so much more. The time, talent and experience they offer our community is irreplaceable.

For information on how you can Make Your Mark or to find other aging resources please go to www.wpcogaaa.org.

Article by Sarah Stamey

Community & Economic Development

Hickory-based Developer Awarded N.C. Commerce Building Reuse Grant



Atriax, PLLC has been awarded a \$75,000 N.C. Commerce Rural Economic Development Building Reuse Grant to create 11 new, full-time jobs.

Based in Hickory, Atriax provides architectural, engineering, and construction services and has been in operation since 2001. Assisted by WPCOG Staff in obtaining the grant, Atriax is renovating a vacant building near Hickory's downtown at 703 Main Ave. SW.

The company has worked extensively with the federal government - including the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Air Force.

Atriax has satellite offices in Fairborn, Ohio, and Kansas City, Kan. The Hickory site serves as the company's headquarters.

In order to receive full funding for the grant, Atriax will create the 11 jobs and maintain them for at least six months. The City of Hickory, Catawba County Economic Development Corporation, and the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina all participated in pulling the grant together.

Article by Paul Teague

Community & Regional Planning

50 Ways Census Data are Used

Operations for collecting data for the 2020 Census continues. How important is the Census to the region? The following list, produced by the US Census Bureau, shows 50 ways that Census 2020 results will be used:

1. Decision making at all levels of government
2. Drawing federal, state and local legislative districts
3. Attracting new businesses to state and local areas
4. Distributing billions in federal funds and even more in state funds
5. Forecasting future transportation needs for all segments of the population
6. Planning for hospitals, nursing homes, clinics, and the location of other health services
7. Forecasting future housing needs for all segments of the population
8. Directing funds for services for people in poverty
9. Designating public safety strategies
10. Development of rural areas
11. Analyzing local trends
12. Estimating the number of people displaced by natural disasters
13. Developing assistance programs for American Indians and Alaska Natives
14. Creating maps to speed emergency services to households in need of assistance
15. Delivering goods and services to local markets
16. Designating facilities for people with disabilities, the elderly, or children
17. Planning future government services
18. Planning investments and evaluating financial risk
19. Publishing economic and statistical reports about the United States and its people
20. Facilitating scientific research
21. Developing "intelligent" maps for government and business

22. Providing proof of age, relationship, or residence certificates provided by the US Census Bureau
23. Distributing medical research
24. Reapportioning seats in the House of Representatives
25. Planning and researching for media as backup for news stories
26. Providing evidence in litigation involving land use, voting rights, and equal opportunity
27. Drawing school district boundaries
28. Planning budgets for government at all levels
29. Spotting trends in the economic well-being of the nation
30. Planning for public transportation services
31. Planning health and educational services for people with disabilities
32. Establishing fair market rents and enforcing fair lending practices
33. Directing services to children and adults with limited English language proficiency
34. Planning urban land use
35. Planning outreach strategies
36. Understanding labor supply
37. Assessing the potential for spread of communicable diseases
38. Analyzing military potential
39. Making business decisions
40. Understanding consumer needs
41. Planning for congregations
42. Locating factory sites and distribution centers
43. Distributing catalogs and developing direct mail pieces
44. Setting a standard for creating both public and private sector surveys
45. Evaluating programs in different geographic areas
46. Providing genealogical research
47. Planning for school projects
48. Developing adult education programs
49. Researching historical subject areas
50. Determining areas eligible for housing assistance and rehabilitation loans

Article by Taylor Dellinger

Regional Housing Authority Introducing Our Newest Team Member

Jared Nava-Salgado was recently hired as the EnVision Center Career Coach by the RHA. The goal for Jared will be to improve the economic sustainability of individuals and families by empowering them with opportunities to improve their economic outlook and become self-sufficient. Jared will be leading this charge by identifying an individual's skill-sets, supplementing them with training, and finally, matching them with local businesses who demand those skills. This program is being provided at no cost to families within our region who are searching for employment and seeking to enhance their ability to secure employment.

Jared began work with the RHA on March 26, before that time she was working with CVCC as an Administrative Assistant in the Workforce Development Innovation Center. Jared is bilingual, she speaks, reads and writes both English and Spanish.

If you are interested in learning more about the RHA EnVision Center, please visit our website at www.wpcog.org/envision-center. The EnVision Centers demonstration is premised on the notion that financial support alone is insufficient to solve the problem of poverty. Intentional and collective efforts across a diverse set of organizations are needed to implement a holistic approach to foster long-lasting self-sufficiency. EnVision Centers will provide communities with a centralized hub for support in the following four pillars: (1) Economic Empowerment, (2) Educational Advancement, (3) Health and Wellness, and (4) Character and Leadership.

If you are interested in Career Coaching and employment opportunities please contact Jared for assistance. Email: jared.navasalgado@wpcog.org | Phone: 828-485-4234 | Fax: Attn: Jared 828-322-5991 | Mail: Attn: Jared, PO Box 9026, Hickory, NC 28603 OR use this link to complete our Career Readiness Assessment, <https://forms.gle/kzK67KD91eRhJYir5> Jared will be sure to reach out once she has received the completed assessment.

Article by Kala Guido

ANNOUNCEMENTS



It is during times like this when our communities rely on their local government teams for so much, and the team at the Alliance is tremendously proud to work alongside you and support your efforts. We know there are significant demands on your teams right now, and pivots you are making in your own organizations to keep operations running. And of course, the health and well-being of you and your teammates are our top priority.

To ensure your safety, and be mindful of the shifting priorities, **AFI has been able to move the TLG 2020 conference dates to Sept. 1-4.** These four days of fiery positive energy will be a welcome inspiration and a coming together of passionate local government professionals - just what we all will need to reboot and reenergize!

Anyone who has already registered for the conference under the original dates will have their registrations automatically transferred (while the some hotel blocks will be available, hotel reservations will need to be re-booked).

If you haven't registered, registration is still open at transformgov.org/tlg2020. And as a reminder, because of AFI's partnership, members can register now with discount code WPCOG to save \$50 off the registration cost. Follow along on Twitter at #TLG2020 to keep in touch with the latest conference updates, or reach out to our team at conferences@transformgov.org with any questions.

WPCOG CALENDAR

All scheduled meetings are currently being conducted electronically.
For a listing of upcoming meetings and information on how to participate or attend, please visit www.wpcog.org/electronic-public-meetings.

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